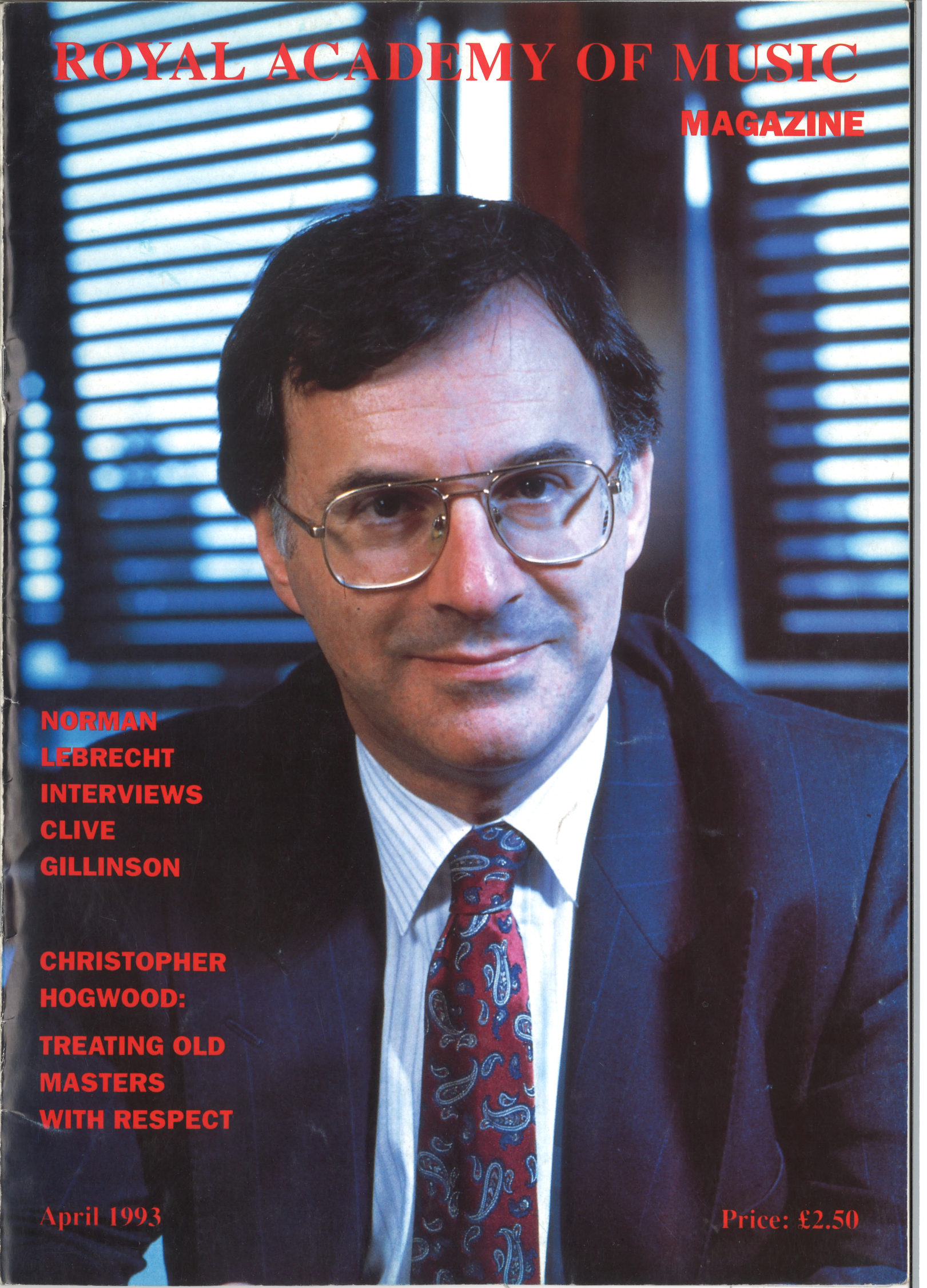


ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC MAGAZINE

A portrait of Norman Lebrecht, a man with dark hair and glasses, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and a red tie with a blue and white paisley pattern. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background consists of horizontal window blinds, with light filtering through them, creating a pattern of light and dark horizontal stripes.

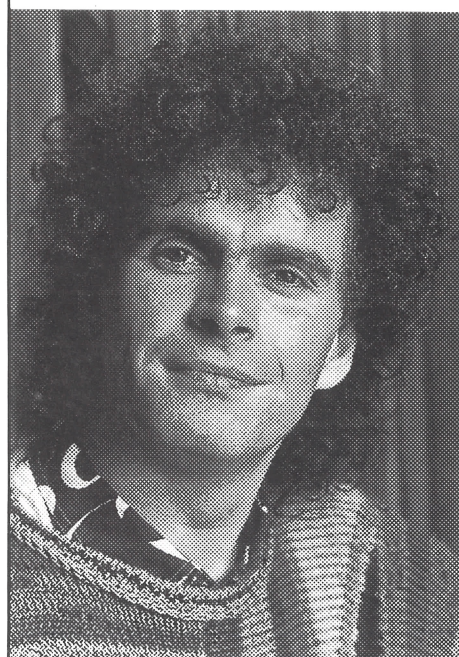
**NORMAN
LEBRECHT
INTERVIEWS
CLIVE
GILLINSON**

**CHRISTOPHER
HOGWOOD:
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MASTERS
WITH RESPECT**

April 1993

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ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC MAGAZINE

THE first issue of this magazine was published in October 1900 and the opening editorial column announced its "primary object [was] the maintenance of friendly intercourse between gentlemen who are past students of the Royal Academy of Music".

The magazine no longer promotes intercourse between gentlemen, and nor is it not so concerned with "the ethical aspects of modern music with a special reference to the descent of the Russians on Queen's Hall". Nonetheless it has survived as a mouthpiece for graduates of a school which has become more highly attuned to modern music than at any time in its 170 year history.

The Academy's old reputation as a bastion of fustiness was finally stifled by the RAM Da Capo festival in March. This saw the descent of 60 modern composers, all of them Academy trained, and there were some 50 premieres or first London performances. The newly refurbished Duke's Hall was the venue for much of this new music and the event is a tribute to Sir David Lumsden who, since starting as Principal ten years ago, has changed the Academy into a place where contemporary music flourishes.

Nigel Clarke, in his article on page 16, charts the growth of the Academy's composer festivals since they began in 1984. He notes that when he had started as an undergraduate two years earlier there was not even a composition faculty. Now, thanks to the efforts of Paul Patterson, the composition faculty is a permanent fixture which has recently welcomed its new visiting professor. Howard Blake's name is a byword for successful musical versatility, though he rounds off this issue of the magazine with a reminder that composition can't really be taught.

Amelia Freedman, (who, at the end of her student days, provisionally called her new band the Academy Ensemble) founded the Nash Ensemble to "bridge the divide between the student and the professional". Her long term achievement has been to make performances mixing the old and new seem a commonplace. The battles for acceptance that she, Howard Blake, Nicholas Maw and John Tavener had to fight at the Royal Academy of the sixties have been won.

However, tradition must not be abandoned because people won't look forward to posterity who have never looked back at their ancestors. We begin with an article by Christopher Hogwood, marking his appointment as International Chair of Early Music Studies. He says: "As far as music is concerned, historical has almost become a dirty word. Will it, one wonders, go the same way down the semantic waste-pipe as stoned, gay, fantastic...?" The answer is definitely No, although he could have added "friendly intercourse" to his list of discredited words.

As far as magazines go, the best form of friendly intercourse is on the letters page. If readers use the space there is here to promote their views, the RAM Magazine will be the better for it and we look forward to hearing from any reader who has anything to say in print.

4 News

6 Cleaning the picture of music
Christopher Hogwood's approach to old masters

8 Knowing the score
Norman Lebrecht's profile of Clive Gillinson

10 Musical politician
Emma Nicholson MP on her time at the RAM

12 Beyond the concert platform
Ann Tennant on the CBSO's educational work

14 Shrink-wrapped music
Paul Robertson on the rights and lefts of music

16 Hitting new notes
Nigel Clarke's celebration of contemporary music

19 Competition blues
Alexander Kelly tangles with Ella Cyder

20 Go and do it for yourself
Paul Fisher talks to Amelia Freedman

24 The romantic dreamer
Charles Searson's appreciation of Arnold Bax

26 Jack of all trades
Jessica Duchon interviews Howard Blake

COVER PHOTO OF CLIVE GILLINSON BY KEITH SAUNDERS

NEXT ISSUE:

Principal changes: farewell to Sir David Lumsden and welcome to Lynn Harrell... Chi-chi Nwanoku... plus (we hope) Readers Letters

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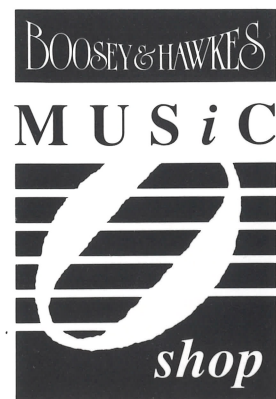
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Mr F L Archer was awarded an Honorary Fellowship at a special ceremony last October on his annual visit to England from his home in the West Indies. For many years he has been a kind benefactor of the Academy; in particular enjoying a close relationship with the jazz course. He founded the Benjamin Doniger Jazz Scholarship in 1982 and the Scott Philbrick Jazz Scholarship in 1988. On this recent visit he presented the Principal with an endowment for the Rose Roitman Award and the Craig Ball Jazz Award. The photograph (left) shows Mr Archer in HonFRAM robes with several students from the jazz course who are, from the left, George Muranyi, Clive Garrick, Nick Coetzee and Jon Noyce.

50 years of new music

THE Society for Promotion of New Music is 50 years old this year, and has just celebrated the occasion with a week-long festival.

Richard Steele, its Administrator, and also for a number of years the Treasurer of the RAM Club, will be writing an article about SPNM for the next issue of the Magazine.

Performance studies

THE Academy announces the appointment of Laurence Dreyfus as the first Chair of Performance Studies in association with King's College, London.

Trained as a cellist at the Juilliard, he is now considered among the top players in the world on the viola da gamba. As a scholar, his articles, editions and books on Baroque music, particularly his work on Bach, have earned him an international reputation.

At both Yale University and, latterly, at Stanford University, where he holds a personal chair, he has continued to balance performance and scholarship in a way which will be of considerable benefit to the Academy, particularly as it develops its new M Mus degree in performance.

Early music

THE Academy announces the appointment of Christopher Hogwood CBE as International Chair of Early Music Studies.

He is a harpsichordist, conductor, musicologist, writer, editor and broadcaster, with many books, articles and keyboard and orchestral recordings to his credit.

After leaving Cambridge he was a founder member of the Early Music Consort of London and then of the Academy of Ancient Music. Most recently he has been Artistic Adviser to the Australian Chamber Orchestra and Principal Guest Conductor, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, USA. He writes about his approach to classical music on page 6.

Embassy news

THE Hellier Quartet (Harriet Rayfield, Helen Bome, Rosalyn Cabot, Helen Edgar), with Ruth Bolister (oboe), recently performed a lunchtime concert in the British embassy, Paris, in the presence of the Princess of Wales.

In Budapest the Medea Quartet and the London Cantilena Wind Quintet performed at the British embassy and the Liszt Ferenc Academy.

New Year's Honours

- ☐ KBE - Sir Malcolm Arnold HonRAM
- ☐ DBE - Margaret Price HonRAM
- ☐ CBE - Richard Armstrong HonRAM
- ☐ OBE - Evelyn Glennie FRAM

Deaths

WE pay tribute to the memory of the following:

- ☐ William Mathias CBE FRAM, 29th July 1992
- ☐ Arthur Davison CBE FRAM, 23rd August 1992
- ☐ Sir Geraint Evans CBE HonRAM, 19th Sept 1992
- ☐ Allen Percival CBE HonRAM, September 1992
- ☐ Roderick Jones FRAM, September 1992
- ☐ Dr Peter Le Huray HonRAM, 7th October 1992 (member of Committee of Management from 1984)
- ☐ Douglas Hopkins FRAM, 2nd December 1992 (member of Professorial Staff 1944-78)
- ☐ Michael Dobson FRAM, 8th December 1992 (member of Professorial Staff 1967-84)
- ☐ Madeleine Windsor FRAM, 6th December 1992 (member of Professorial Staff 1933-78)
- ☐ Bryan Henderson, 10th January 1993 (Manager of former RAM student bar 1979-86 and member of Security Staff from 1986)

Sponsorship

ONCE again the Academy thanks a number of benefactors and donors whose gifts have made many of its activities possible. These have included:

The RAM Guild, for its help with motorising the front of house tabs in the Sir Jack Lyons Theatre; The Friends of the Academy, for providing four travel bursaries for students and equipment for the Music Box scheme run by Janet Snowman for students seeking help to launch their careers; Centurion Press Group Ltd, for its

sponsorship of the Empire Brass concert in November 1992; Cadence Design Systems Ltd, for its sponsorship of the Symphony Orchestra concert on 20th March 1993; Morgan Grenfell Group plc, the Bank of England, the Leverhulme Trust, the Millichope Foundation, the Douglas Heath Eves Trust, the 3i Group plc, John Dickinson Ltd and the Edgar Lee Foundation, for their continuing annual support.

International Distillers and Vintners Ltd, for their support for the Academy's chamber

music activities; the Save and Prosper Education Trust, the Kobler Trust, the Noswad Charitable Trust and the Austin and Hope Charitable Trust, for their support of students by way of bursaries; and numerous individual donations, including Abbey National plc, Sun International and Mr Trevor Henderson.

Without the tremendous financial assistance from IBM United Kingdom Ltd and the RVW Trust, the Academy's 1993 Composers Festival would simply not have been possible.



Sir Henry J Wood is seen here in the garden of Cumberland Lodge, Ealing, probably in 1935. This was the home of Mrs Jessie Linton, a widow who later became Lady Jessie Wood. Sir Henry, who was then in his mid-sixties, adored the black Scots terrier, Michael, which had originally belonged to Mrs Linton's daughter. When Sir Henry was away on tour, he telephoned home and talk to the dog

which would "sing" back at him. Family tradition has it that, since Sir Henry phoned punctually at six every evening, the dog would recognise the ringing tone and be ready for his call. The caption information is from Arthur Jacobs, whose biography of Sir Henry J Wood will be published next year. If any other reader knows of interesting archive photographs please contact the editor.

Cleaning the picture of music

To mark his recent appointment to the Academy's International Chair of Performance Studies, Christopher Hogwood outlines his musical approach

AS FAR as music is concerned, historical has almost become a dirty word. Will it, one wonders, go the same way down the semantic waste-pipe as stoned, gay, fantastic, grass, hip and pot? After a particularly excruciating performance of a Bach cantata with "original" instruments last year, an eminent German critic turned to his speechless companions, radiant with enthusiasm, exclaiming "Ach, and so it would have been", and proceeded to write the event up as "an historical performance". An American scholar of distinction recently wrote that "There is nothing drearier than historical performances that lack musical conviction and imagination: surely it is simpler to leave out the word "historical" and express a general distaste for dreary performances rather than snipe at the current trend towards cleaning the picture of music.

"Historical" has become for us what "Gothick" might have been for our great-grandparents. They, no doubt, found Rembrandt's Night Watch a painting overflowing with Gothick atmosphere and imagination. Pity, therefore that on cleaning, it has turned out to be a day-time scene, bearing no relation to the tenebrous imitations it spawned in the last century, but adding much to our knowledge of Rembrandt as a recorder of civic grandeur. In this case it is the encrustation of faded varnish and dirt that is "historical" – the new picture is "original".

Recently in music "historical" has become an apologia for much painful vivisection performed by ill-qualified surgeons before a paying audience, an affront to our sensibilities which in non-artistic spheres would be illegal. Musical performance is exploratory, not experimental: uplifting, not therapeutic. It consists of an act of faith on the part of the composer (alive or dead) that performers will with conviction recreate the nuances of sound and expression that made up his original intention – a social contract implicit in all the interpretative arts. Were a Matisse on the closing of the gallery doors to dissolve into a small pot of primary colours, leaving a blank canvas on the wall plus the painter's recipe for the reconstitution of his work, how rigorously we would adhere to his instructions. How painstakingly we would reassemble the statue of David from a heap of marble dust. And if we had had this opportunity in the plastic arts, of course, we would never have stopped short at Venus de Milo's arms (or would we? – think of those amputated Figaros and Traviatas).

Music has potential advantages which we should not despise simply because the act of recreation brings it into closer contact than usual with the fads and fashions of presentation. The greater danger, however, is that the live performer can effect introductions between artists of the past which the non-interpretative arts could never

conceive. To hang a Rubens beside a Whistler will not alter the mode of expression of either of those gentlemen. But to perform Bach with the resources, reactions and expectations of Tchaikovsky will certainly alter the former (the reverse situation, mercifully not yet with us, might be even more bizarre).

Dr Johnson's creed as a literary editor has taken too long to influence musical circles, and when it has, the victims have been accused of contracting musicology. "Nothing shall be imposed... without notice of alteration; nor shall conjecture be wantonly or unnecessarily indulged." This is fine for the production of a text, for the resolution of historical quandaries and for the exposing of as much source material as the active musical builder requires for his present manner of construction. But in the arts, a clock without a face does not tell the time, no matter how exquisitely the mechanism has been fashioned. And it is in giving breath to mute documents, proposing an historical sensation as living actuality that the "unscientific" element of the performer can rouse such strong feelings today.

Just as the nineteenth-century composer frequently found he was his own best interpreter, so the twentieth-century musical archaeologist should, and does defend his own theories in practice. With the two facets combined, there need be no complaints of the "unquestioned primacy accorded intellectual activity over artistic" in "authentic performance practice".

I quote these last three words with trepidation, since, as I suggested at the outset, too many general complaints are marshalled under the semantic umbrella of the "historical" approach. Each generation knits its own baroque, just as it knits its own Shakespeare. We have fairly recently knitted our own renaissance and Middle Ages in a variety of florid patterns. While purl is almost always preferred to plain, the resulting garment often will not fit the body it was supposedly measured from. When, several years ago, the Early Music Consort was invited to supply incidental music to accompany a filmed life of Henry VIII, it seemed a natural opportunity to include some music by the monarch himself.

After playing through a few sample pieces to the directors of the venture, it was decided that such repertoire could not be used because it "didn't sound in period". It seems that, on the open market at least, Jacobean music must wed Tudor monarchs, just as, in most civilised media, Vivaldi must hold the hand of Bernini. And yet so accustomed have we grown to this chronological displacement that when history is synchronised, we greet with disbelief the news that Handel wrote oratorios while Haydn was producing divertimenti; or, more

disconcerting still, that Haydn actually sang at Vivaldi's funeral.

Comparisons with the graphic arts may sound finely metaphorical, and many analogies crumble along with received principles at the first ring of the cash register. But whatever the commercial temptations, some things cannot change. We still have two ears, left and right. We would hesitate to reassemble the sections of a Memling altar triptych, putting aside both panels on the left; we would offer our ticket for resale if we discovered Concorde with two starboard wings and I would suggest that the reaction of Bach and Mozart would be similar if asked to attend a performance of their orchestral music with both the first and the second violin sections seated to the left of the conductor. Antiphony was an integral component of their composing techniques; question and answer was for them as basic as it was for the Psalmist. It is perverse and unfair that the very age that considers itself to have invented stereo should so persistently obliterate all evidence of it in the works of such masters, and describe attempts to reinstate the wishes of Bach and Mozart as "anachronistic".

Nature has placed a limit to the highest note that you can sing, even given the best sound-proofed bathroom. To insist that pitch should rise higher and higher, simply so that large orchestral sections of violins may sound the more and more brilliant is to pose impossible problems for the voice, and to distort the balance and colours of the original (Rembrandt "improved" with fluorescent tints...). Beethoven asked his choral basses in the Ninth Symphony to reach for the highest note that could be called practicable, a high F. Even the text "uberm Sternenzelt muss ein lieber Vater wohnen" (Above the starry canopy, there must dwell a loving father) cannot justify the grotesque results when the passage is sung at present-day pitch which, in some countries, has risen almost a semitone above the one Beethoven knew, and is continuing to rise.

Most composers intend the detail of their compositions to be audible. The two flute parts of the "Qui Tollis" in the B Minor Mass are the life-blood of that movement, yet even the most golden of modern flutes cannot rescue them when the

chorus is six times the size Bach scored for. Conversely, Handel, faced with a similar problem, allocated two oboes to each line of his score; the fact that we persist in employing only one to a part convicts us of inconsistency as well as insensitivity. And, reducing the problem to its most vulgar level, surely any modern trade union would approve the eighteenth century solution of the inaudible

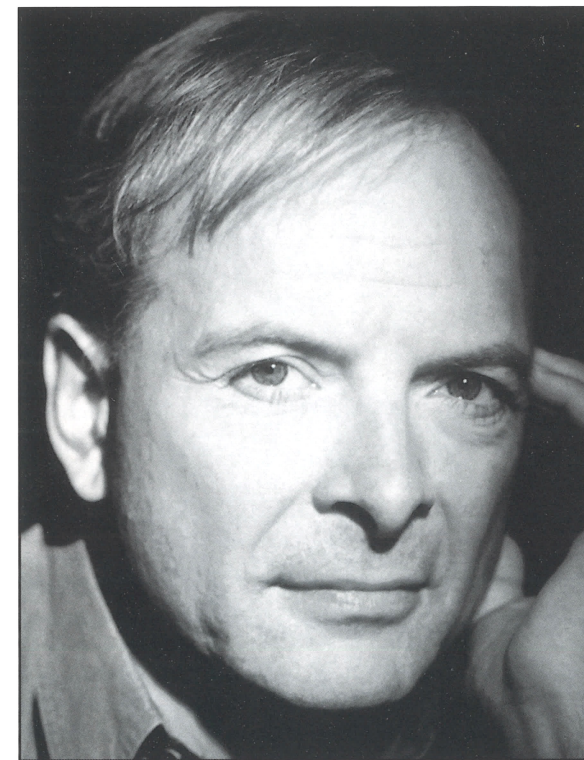
harpsichord or lute, which was to employ two or more of them rather than the present reinforcement of one with an amplifier.

Even though Brahms might well be as affronted as Bach to hear what alterations have been made to his music, the prejudices which blind us to the needs of classical and pre-classical music derive essentially from the nineteenth century symphony orchestra. A continuous legato from all players and a continuous vibrato from all singers is as good a way as any of closing the avenues to a feeling for eighteenth-century nuance and inflection, just as insistence on modern orchestra and choral numbers will upset eighteenth-century calculations. The fact that the last train leaves at 10.30 is no excuse for insulting Beethoven's basic design by ignoring his express indication for

repeats; the fact that Madame Zabaglione must sing Aida tomorrow should not reconcile us to her offering a foretaste of that role in her Monteverdi today.

True, we can never listen to early music with the ears of those who first heard – but the same limitation does not prevent us using our other senses in the visual – and even edible arts. Nor can the argument that resources have "improved" be invoked; this is fluorescent paint again.

None of this mentions "original instruments", nor "authentic voices". The omission is deliberate, since they are no more than the out-riders of the crusade. The fact that they have scholar-performers in their midst minimises, to me at least, the likelihood of their betraying the act of faith that accompanied the act of setting down music in notation in the first place. But the musical problem is one that recruits us all – listeners, editors, musicologists and performers; the banner under which we march is neither the neume, nor the one-keyed flute, but the Night Watch – before and after.



Christopher Hogwood: "We would offer our ticket for resale if we discovered Concorde with two starboard wings and I would suggest that the reaction of Bach and Mozart would be similar if asked to attend a performance of their orchestral music with both the first and second violin sections seated to the left of the conductor."

PHOTO: DECCA/JULIAN BROAD

Christopher Hogwood is the Academy's International Chair of Early Music Studies and is a founder of the Academy of Ancient Music

Knowing the score

Clive Gillinson, the LSO manager, is one of the few musicians who can read a balance sheet as fluently as an orchestral score. By Norman Lebrecht



Clive Gillinson was a London Symphony Orchestra cellist for 15 years and before that studied at the Academy. His favourite memory of student days is playing the Brahms double concerto with Carolyn Sperry

PHOTO: KEITH SAUNDERS

CLIVE GILLINSON is a good man to know in a crisis. A hard-working cellist in the London Symphony Orchestra, he took over as manager when the company faced bankruptcy in 1983 and has never looked back. Today, in the depths of recession, the LSO is the most securely funded of British orchestras and Gillinson has acquired a reputation as a minor miracle worker.

He has been elected chairman of the Association of British Orchestras and frequently gets called out as fireman to tackle local conflagrations. Unlike most arts administrators in Britain, Gillinson dislikes fudge. He quit a committee set-up to reform the London music colleges because he felt other members were too keen to protect traditions and buildings. Despatched by the Arts Council to investigate a communications breakdown at the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic last summer, his confidential report resulted in prompt resignations.

Gillinson knows his own mind and is unafraid to speak bluntly. He has taken tough commercial decisions and has sacrificed the easy camaraderie of being "one of the band". His heart, though, has

remained wholly on the side of musicians and their interests. As a cellist, he retains an outsized streak of pure sentimentality.

He came to the Academy in 1966 as a student in Douglas Cameron's class, "because most of my friends in the National Youth Orchestra went to Duggie". He was slightly older than the rest, having switched over from a maths degree at London University, and was inhibited by shyness from joining the social whirl. "At the Academy, you did what you needed to do, nothing else," he recalls. "If you were any good at it, you spent all your time practising and playing."

Before his first-year orchestral audition he told Maurice Handford, "I want to be a soloist and play chamber music". The conductor replied: "Everyone wants to do that, and none of you will". Gillinson's most cherished musical experience in four years at the Academy was playing the Brahms double concerto with Carolyn Sperry.

The educational system at that time, he felt, did nothing to prepare students for real life in the musical world. Anyone caught playing in a

professional orchestra was liable to be expelled. "In the final year, we all did," he grins. Gillinson freelanced with the Royal Philharmonic and the Philharmonia before joining the oldest and liveliest of the London orchestras. "There has always been this myth about the LSO that it's a really tough orchestra," he says. "When I was at the Academy, everybody was scared of it. The irony was, when I did the audition it was the most friendly and welcoming orchestra of the lot."

He played in the cellos for fifteen years, sitting just behind the eruptive principal Duggie Cummings and beside the beatific, bearded Francis Saunders. He married, had a daughter and twins, and in his spare time helped his wife, Penny, with her Hampstead antique shop. When the crunch came, he was one of few players who could read a balance sheet as fluently as a symphonic score.

The LSO hit trouble when it moved to the Barbican at the start of the Thatcher recession, with a programme of high ideals and no assurance that an audience would follow it to a new location. The hall had acoustic problems and giving Berlioz and Tippett double-bills to half-empty houses was a recipe for economic ruin. "Don't worry," Gillinson was told when he asked to see the books, "something will turn up. They won't let the LSO go under".

In the event, players had to contribute £43 a week to stave off creditors and Gillinson was elected finance director at the end of 1983. Six months later he stepped in as managing director on a temporary basis. Offered a five-year contract, he asked for a year to decide whether he wanted to give up playing. He knew he could not combine both roles, and soon sold his cello.

One of his first tasks was to beseech the music director, Claudio Abbado, to cancel his ambitious "Mahler, Vienna and the Twentieth Century" series. Abbado refused. "Claudio taught me an important lesson," says Gillinson. "You don't compromise on artistic principle."

Funding was somehow found for the Mahler cycle. It proved a breakthrough for the London music world, demonstrating that audiences would subscribe to an entire series if it liked the theme, and that an attractive menu could be toured in Europe.

As soon as the orchestra was solvent, Gillinson raised concert fees by 25 percent and cut back the commercial drudgery that players undertook to make ends meet. He pushed through a scheme to share all the principal seats between two players, giving the incumbents time and space for personal development. "You take up music to express your individuality, then you join an orchestra and have to repress it," explains Gillinson. "It's terribly

important to enable players to reclaim their personality from the orchestral experience."

Members of the LSO are encouraged to join composing workshops, play in schools and prisons, teach the handicapped. Annual funding of a million pounds apiece was obtained from the Arts Council and the City of London, leaving the LSO the richest band in the land. Top-quality soloists like Moray Welsh, Edward Vanderspar and Alexander Barantschik were recruited for principal positions; star players from other orchestras applied to join.

When Abbado went to Vienna, it was decided not to appoint a music director but to form a team of specialists in which Michael Tilson Thomas would be *primus inter pares*. The LSO has first call on Sir Colin Davis, Andre Previn, Sir Georg Solti, Kent Nagano, Mstislav Rostropovich and others on a "horses for courses" basis. Rostropovich's Shostakovich cycle transformed public perception

"You take up music to express your individuality, then you join an orchestra and have to repress it.

It is terribly important to enable players to reclaim their personality from the orchestral experience."

Clive Gillinson

of the composer; his Prokofiev series retrieved lost scores from the Soviet dustbin and his Britten retrospective is the first of its kind. Davis restored Sibelius to public circulation (and profitability) after a decade of decline. Solti took the LSO to Salzburg. Nagano will contribute a Messiaen premiere.

The absence of an all-powerful conductor places an unusual degree of musical authority in Gillinson's grip. With a mixture of market realism and musical fervour, he aims to make the LSO's 90th birthday season in 1994 "the most exciting in its history", with retrospectives of Messiaen, Schnittke, Boulez and Tippett.

Rejuvenation seems to be a byword, both in repertoire and in the playing corps. Dismayed at the detachment he remembered from his Academy days, he has set up a scheme with the Guildhall School of Music to enable their senior wind students to play with the orchestra, learn the ropes and apply to join. He feels that "there has never been enough orientation towards life in the profession" and that the colleges are still turning out too many players of less than the highest quality, who "should have been directed towards another musical occupation".

Norman Lebrecht's latest books are The Maestro Myth (Simon & Schuster, £8.99), The Companion to 20th Century Music (S & S) £20 and Music in London (Aurum Press, £9.95). He is writing a history of the music business.

Musician, programmer and MP

Emma Nicholson on her undergraduate years at the Royal Academy of Music – and how they helped her subsequent career

MUSIC formed part of my life from the very beginning. Early attempts to miss church were cunningly thwarted by my mother, who obtained for me, at the age of three-and-a-half, a place in the choir. How satisfying it was to be in the heart of the service, for, as I had said to her in rebellion, the purpose of church was the music. Our organist was a miracle worker. Today, her condition would have been helped from birth; as it was, she struggled wonderfully well with a physical disability that hampered both her gait and her articulation. She could not sing in the choir (forming words to a rhythm was too difficult) and physical movement was jerky and unco-ordinated as she walked up the aisle. But on the organ, she was transformed, her hands just able to pull out the stops and manage the keys as well, while her feet gave occasional support on the pedals to the choir and audience.

When I took over from her sometimes, at the age of eight and onwards, I discovered the real flaw to the perfect performance: the verger. He held the power to mar the smooth flow of sound, to disrupt the singers, confuse the warbling vicar or even the tone-deaf curate (often muddled from a learner bicycle tumble) and to bring a frisson of horror to the body of the church. By the verger's just withholding his raw-arm energy at the bottom of the pumping cycle, the bellows failed. A sound like pigs at slaughter filled the air and fled. Fingers pressed keys, continuing the falling phrase; no wind stirred the reeds in the organ pipes and all in church fell silent. He became my enemy.

Sitting on the organ stool I found a sweet revenge. There was a small crack in the loft through which, if I twisted myself carefully, I could occasionally catch a glimpse of him sitting, scowling by the bellows pump handle. I saw that during the sermon he took the Biblical message of Sunday seriously – and went to sleep. Beside his ear as he leant against the stone, in slumber, projected the whistle pipe. Although it meant a subsequent economy with the truth, when explaining the interruption to the vicar's sermon, I found that the satisfactorily sharp and harsh sound projected by my pulling the whistle stop penetrated the verger's ear-drum and woke him up. He hated it. The pulpit was close enough for the vicar to hear, but the noise was muffled from him and the congregation by the old velvet curtain the verger drew to shield his sleep from them all.

Besides, I had the backing of the choir whose aggravation with the verger was large and constant. The choirmen rang the bells to bring in the congregation, a job the verger wanted; he cleaned the vestry where the choristers robed and left the mouse-droppings; he did not pay proper reverence

to piles of music when he swept the choirstalls; the list was endless and the feud carried on in the pub and fields during the week's work.

Music at home revolved around the pianos. At one time we had three grand pianos, each in different rooms (our house was not large) and my sisters and I tried to play piano trios with all the doors propped open. One sister played the violin, I and my sister Laura, who went on to study at the Royal College, both took up the cello, and my youngest sister had a deep bass contralto. My mother, who played nothing and had very acute hearing, stayed at the far end of the garden, painting watercolour miniatures of flowers, to escape our musical energy. Her deep embarrassment would peak in church or public places when we each took a different part of a hymn or song.

I wished that I could have told her of the usefulness of breath control and vocal power when, last year, in the House of Commons, nearly the whole Opposition tried to shout me down and I was able vocally to hold my own until the Speaker ruled them out of order and suspended the sitting, the first suspension of the House for 39 years.

I owe my diaphragm control not to the gentle Anglican nuns who taught me plainsong when I led the St. Mary's, Wantage, school choir; they were too sensitive about human flesh to be able to explain the workings of the physical lung mechanism hidden beneath their black robes. My teacher was the great Henry Cummings, perversely smoking forty cigarettes a day. "I don't inhale, the smoke doesn't touch my vocal chords" he'd protest through waves of smoke and piles of stubs, his room tucked up in the eaves (below the practice rooms) at the Royal Academy, as far away from the non-smoking establishment as could be properly contrived. He sang with Kathleen Ferrier in his youth and still retained his love of excellence in performance and purity of line in song. But he was fun to learn from, too; a change from some of the professors whose students seemed so awed by their persona that performance seemed a little cramped and mannered.

Henry's accompanist, Nora, became his wife while I was still his student. She insisted on the slimmest of wedding rings as, after a life-time of professional playing, she was worried that the balance or flexibility of her finger-work might be undone by the weight or intrusion of the ring.

Keith Harvey, a young and thoughtful cellist, taught me a few of his wonderful playing skills. Professor John Paner taught me the piano, my first study. He was the most patient and kindest of teachers. Coming to the end of a long career (he'd fled to Britain from war-time Germany, I'd always

understood), and with weakened health, he still gave thoughtful tutoring to a wide variance of talents and persistence.

Some students at the RAM worked diligently and got no better, some fell by the wayside and could not rise again at all and, as was the Academy's wont, a very, very few of all the seven hundred shone and burst their own barriers of expectation. We all knew that that was the purpose of the Academy; to find and foster the world's musical geniuses or the performing or composing equivalents of double firsts.

Presiding benignly over all was the calm eminence: Sir Thomas Armstrong. He and his lovely, talented wife gave tea-parties in their Regent's Park grandeur for new students. Short of clothes and fuelled by RAM canteen food (good and plentiful, but basic in the English way with food) we wondered how to conduct ourselves in the elegance of the Armstrong drawing-room. Their friendliness overcame most social inhibitions and the cakes and sandwiches disappeared in ratio to the students' speeding up of conversation.

Sir Thomas's practical approach to problems and proper setting of priorities came to the fore unexpectedly one week. All female students received an instruction to go within hours to Duke's Hall, where Sir Thomas would address us. An unprecedented summons, to do with an unmarried student's pregnancy and rustication. None of us had time nor wit to work out his message in advance other than expecting a heavy sermon on morality. We all poured into Duke's Hall and sat down. Not long to wait: Sir Thomas ambled onto the stage, looking as he always did – like a friendly, quizzical and very wise tortoise. "Students," he said, "Miss Bloggs has become pregnant. This means that her studies here have been suspended.

Never become pregnant; it will interrupt your musical careers." He would have made a superb behavioural scientist.

My own musical career took an unusual path on leaving the Academy. I joined ICL and became an early computer software specialist. It was a tough world to enter and nearly impossible with inappropriate qualifications (maths was the required degree subject) but my musician's rigour of analysis held true and within a year I was the teacher.

Now, as a politician, I find that the aura of the Academy's excellence is such that when people hear I'm a former student they assume I can give a recital, tomorrow, and for at least two and a half hours, at such a level that they can charge the audience sufficiently high prices to rebuild the whole church tower the following week.

The excellence of choral music in my part of Devon is very high. I cannot refuse to help, that would be churlish. But as I force my sluggish fingers around three stubborn, sticking organ manuals, untuneful with each other, some stops labelled "Do not touch", my feet more clumsy by the ground bass' progress, I thank my guardian angel Raphael that none of my professors nor any Academicians are in earshot. Until, exhausted and finished with the last chords fading, a small and eager figure approaches, "Oh Miss Nicholson," he says, "I'm glad to meet you at last. You see, I've been one of the Associated Board's international examiners for many years; it's good to know we have an ex-Academician in this village now." He flies off to Sumatra to continue the AB's good work immediately; I recall my earliest musical ambition, to gain an FRCO, and vow to seek some lessons.

The wheel has turned full circle; now for the real challenge.

Emma Nicholson: "The excellence of choral music in my part of Devon is very high. I cannot refuse to help, that would be churlish. But as I force my sluggish fingers around three stubborn, sticking organ manuals, untuneful with each other, some stops labelled "Do not touch", my feet more clumsy by the ground bass' progress, I thank my guardian angel Raphael that none of my professors nor any Academicians are in earshot."

PHOTO: NORTH DEVON JOURNAL



Emma Nicholson is the Conservative MP for Torridge and West Devon, and studied piano, cello and singing at the RAM from 1958 to 1961

Beyond the concert platform

Ann Tennant outlines the community work being done by members of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra

EDUCATION work is fun. Perhaps we should start from that premise. It's easy to adopt a high moral tone about bringing music to the community and I shall do just that, but later. I enjoy my job and I'm quite certain that players who take on education projects enjoy themselves too. Music students who join us on work experience make their own valued contribution and have a good time, and so do the school and community groups which take part in practical and creative music making.

I would like to see new orchestra recruits leading the way in education work and bringing in new ideas and youthful enthusiasm. Perhaps when we next advertise for a tutti violin we should be looking for a talented orchestral player who also sees community work as integral to their role in the orchestra. Believe me it brings variety and

intellectual stimulation to a player's working life.

Jackie Tyler (cello) and David Gregory (violin), both ex Royal Academy, can vouch for that. A primary school introduction to Stravinsky's "Petrushka" will be led by Jackie and she will run a workshop for teachers and players which will set the outline and structure for the rest of the project. "In the past we've used someone like the flautist Richard McNicol to generate ideas, and players have taken his approach into schools," says Jackie. "Now I've been asked to give some guidance and cohesion to the project and it's daunting, but I'm excited and challenged by the prospect".

David Gregory, is planning to work closely with Birmingham University's Department of Continuing Studies. On occasions the course tutor will hand over to David who will give a practical

BACK TO SCHOOL

Three Royal Academy trained CBSO members at work in Birmingham schools. Jackie Tyler (left) is a cellist who is pictured here with students during a Bournville College of Further Education project.

Julian Robinson (below) has put down his viola to teach some Hodge Hill pupils some basic keyboard skills.

And David Gregory (below right) is a violinist who has turned his attention to percussion at the Queensbury Sixth Form College.



presentation prior to a CBSO concert which we hope will enhance the pleasure of the audience. David will bring in other CBSO players where appropriate, to illustrate aspects of instrumentation and musical performance.

As well as being a source of pleasure for all concerned, the CBSO shares a conviction that education and community can make an important contribution to the lives of people who may not wish to come to Symphony Hall, who cannot afford to do so, who may not be able to, or who may have no cultural tradition in concert-going. We work closely with marketing and are not ashamed to include audience development within our objectives.

Player development is also an essential part of the work of any education officer. A recent example was a training programme set up to equip players to work effectively in special schools. Observation sessions in schools, a workshop with an experienced amateur and an Awareness Training day with the Breakthrough Trust (an organisation which promotes understanding between deaf and hearing people) were all part of the planning process for a project in schools for children with a variety of special needs.

Julian Robinson (viola) who has enjoyed working on creative music projects in mainstream education, was keen to join the special schools project. "I'm working with the oboist Peter Walden at a school for children with severe learning difficulties," says Julian. "Most of the children appeared to relax and really listen to the viola on my first visit. The concentration amazed me and a couple of the children wanted to creep really close, even curl up on my knee. One little girl was distressed and remained so on subsequent visits. Perhaps she doesn't like the viola! Her reaction was quite different when Peter played the oboe."

Maggie Cotton (percussion) has taken a

Perhaps when the CBSO next advertises for a violin, it should look for a talented orchestral player who also sees community work as integral to their role in the orchestra

particular interest in bringing a musical experience to deaf people. She recently asked the orchestra if a small group of profoundly deaf teenagers could sit amongst them during a rehearsal. At the orchestra break players stayed behind to let the children examine and blow and play their instruments. Of the recent training Maggie says: "It was useful for musicians who had had no contact with deaf children, and I found it helpful too. There's always something new to learn and it was a chance to recharge my batteries. It's very supportive to know that others in the orchestra are interested too. I get an enormous kick from working in mainstream schools as well. The Rite of Spring project was a

great success with a group of initially sullen teenagers, who as the weeks went by became justifiably proud and enthusiastic about the piece of music they'd created. Yes, I enjoy working in primary and secondary schools but these deaf kids will always be a bit special to me."

"I was very apprehensive," says Heather Bradshaw (violin), "when I made my first

visit to Swanshurst, a 1,600 multi-ethnic comprehensive in Birmingham. But I had a real sense of achievement when my year 8 group produced some excellent work. I felt really proud of them when they played their own composition to the other schools at a sharing session. When they went to see the CBSO performance of The Rite of Spring at Symphony Hall, their enthusiasm was infectious."

In addition to projects based on the CBSO repertoire, our players have worked as sectional coaches for an amateur orchestra, they've run masterclasses and workshops in collaboration with the Instrumental Service and planned a session in a day centre for elderly people. We have players working with young people in a prison for long term offenders, joining in projects at the Birmingham Science Museum, helping children create music in an art gallery and organising a project at a play centre in inner city Birmingham.

In theory anything should be possible. In practice we need to maintain momentum and consolidate projects which we know work well, and try out new approaches and new ideas. The life blood of any orchestra's education work will always be the players, and through them each orchestra seems to develop its own identity and personal style. Ultimately it is the students at the music colleges who will inherit the legacy of the broadening role of the orchestra. It is important that colleges prepare and encourage students, as part of their training to be professional musicians.



Ann Tennant is the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra's education coordinator



"Damage to the right hemisphere of the brain leaves an individual still able to use words and respond logically, but speech will be monotone and without rhythm – in fact, just like a Dalek. Damage to the left hemisphere of the brain eradicates speech and makes it difficult to form concepts."

IT HAS always surprised me that musicians are not more curious about what music actually is and why and how it can inspire such obsessive interest.

A psychiatrist friend tells me that until quite recently, one standard textbook listing mental abnormalities such as paranoia, schizophrenia, depression etc included 'artist' as a category!

I gave up my childhood to practise the violin, not from perversity, but because

Shrink-wrapped music of the hemispheres

Paul Robertson (pictured left) is both a psychologist and musician. He applies both parts of his professional selves to an analysis of music

playing was more gratifying than anything else for me. But it is only in the last eight years or so that I have explored music making in the light of recent neuropsychiatric discoveries. I have sought to find out why music is so powerfully effective, how music affects our brain and how brain function is involved in developing distinctive musical language.

A few years ago a remarkable experiment was undertaken which shows how the brain responds to musical sound. It was discovered, by means of implanted electrodes, that the left and right hemispheres respond selectively to discords and concords. Discords stimulate only the left side of the brain whilst concords excite the right side exclusively.

It is now increasingly clear that the two halves of the brain (the hemispheres) perform different functions. Although the limits of this lateralism, as it is called, are still being defined, it is now well established that in right-handed people the left side of the brain is mainly concerned with verbal language, words and sequential reasoning. The right hemisphere, however, has no

words and deals with our spatial abilities, emotions and sense of rhythm. It also invests our perception with meaning.

Damage to the right hemisphere leaves an individual still able to use words and respond logically, but his speech will be monotone and without rhythm – in fact, just like a Dalek. There is no emotional colour in the expression or thought. Left hemisphere loss, by contrast, eradicates speech and makes it difficult to form concepts, rendering emotional self-control impossible.

Dr Peter Fenwick, consultant neuropsychiatrist to Maudsley and Bethlem Hospital, led us to realise that a better understanding of the relative dominance of left or right hemispheres could offer valuable insights into how music affects us and helps create some composers' particular musical idioms.

We were led to realise that essentially intuitive composers, writing emotionally, will use the rhythmic and concordant language favoured by the right hemisphere. However, predominantly logical, intellectual composers would be drawn to the dissonant, arrhythmic world of the left hemisphere.

Using this model we drew up some composer profiles. As an example of the intellectual composer, Schoenberg springs to mind. His lifelong obsession with words motivates many many of his works, and in time led to his development of 'sprechstimme' (speech voice). Serialism is, of course, largely arrhythmic and dissonant – altogether very left hemisphere in its flavour.

Trained musicians develop their left hemisphere involvement as they develop their musical skills. It is probably for this reason that dissonant intellectual music is interesting almost exclusively to trained musicians. The averagely wired brain is not going to find such music emotionally appealing, therefore.

As a good example of a right hemisphere composer, John Tavener comes to mind. His music certainly uses sonorities and strategies essentially attractive to the right hemisphere. Such intuitive music should therefore elicit an emotional response in the listener, and because of its right hemisphere quality such music should feel invested with meaning.

The limbic system is also important in understanding our response to music. The

limbic system, which lies deep within the brain, gives us our experience of emotional arousal ranging from sensual gratification to the most profound and beautiful religious experiences.

Neurologically, the two main factors which stimulate arousal are novelty and repetition. Any new stimulus which is given priority by the nervous system heightens our emotional tone. Repetition tends to diminish emotional response, creating a base level of emotional response, so that even a small novelty produces a markedly heightened level of arousal. An experience I like is that of flying. I am a nervous passenger in a plane, but quite quickly after take-off, my conscious awareness of the engine noise soon diminishes completely – however, even a slight change of engine pitch will have me sweating and palpitating immediately!

Thus, interplay between novelty and repetition is the major means of creating arousal and this, I think, is a very good description of music and composition.

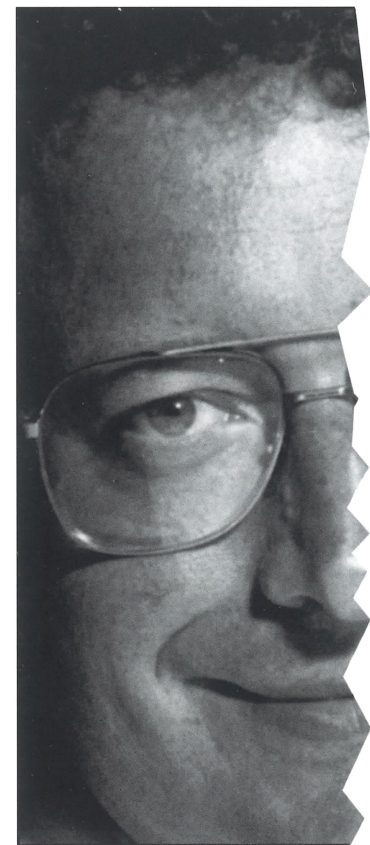
Just to whet the appetite, I invite you to consider the following composers and works listed below on a left/right bias.

Left hemisphere music:

Schoenberg – atonal, dissonant, arrhythmic, no discernible repetition, propensity of intellectual development
Webern, Boulez, Birtwistle...
 etc – the whole gamut of modernists whose sound world is not primarily sensual or subsumed into right hemisphere attractive texture.

Right hemisphere music:

Tavener – novelty within repetition, largely concordant sound and underlying rhythms, overtly religious, no formal development, organic forms.
Glass and Adams – novelty within repetition using incessant ostinato.
Delius – rejection of formal intellectual process, sensuous, orgasmic?
Wagner, Debussy, Franck, Liszt, Janacek, etc
 – composers whose musical arousal is related to erotic arousal. This list can be continued ad lib!



Hitting new notes

Nigel Clarke charts the Academy's extensive involvement in the rise and rise of contemporary music

IN HIS introduction to the Royal Academy of Music's 1992 Prospectus Sir David Lumsden said of Academy students "We aim to develop their imagination and initiative in discovering and exploiting new professional outlets, especially in promoting the music of our own time". Reading this, it seems hard to believe that at the time that Sir David came into office ten years ago, there was still no composition faculty at the Academy and new music was a subsidiary area to the now defunct Harmony and Counterpoint department. One of the new principal's innovations was to set up a faculty under the leadership of the young British composer and alumnus of the Academy, Paul Patterson. Thus the Composition and Contemporary Music faculty was born.

In 1984 Paul Patterson, with the backing of the Academy, realised one of his first departmental ambitions by staging a week-long international music festival. It featured the music of the Polish composer Witold Lutoslawski, and the artist himself



attended as composer-in-residence, supporting rehearsals, giving masterclasses and sharing his experiences with students. His presence in the Academy was something of a watershed and underlined a new attitude towards contemporary music. It showed to those both inside and outside the institution that its role was not purely to teach and perform music of the past, but to be a place where new and exciting ideas could come to fruition. Instead of being a musical museum, the Academy had now become the proponent of music as a living art.

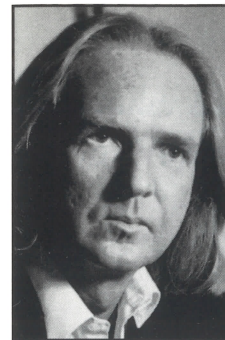
The festival was hailed by the press and musical establishment as a triumph and led to a succession of similar festivals centred on the world's greatest names in composition. Composers-in-residence have included Sir Michael Tippett, Krzysztof Penderecki, Olivier Messiaen, Hans Werner Henze, Luciano Berio and Elliott Carter. And this March there was a hugely successful festival celebrating the music of many composers who have studied at the Academy over the last fifty years. (Details of composers and the works performed are in the panels on pages 17 and 18.)

Alongside the festivals, we have seen a list of eminent names pass through the Academy doors to hear and participate in a one-day programme of events and performances of their works. Such names as Sylvano Bussotti, Sir Harrison Birtwistle, Toru Takemitsu, Gyorgy Ligeti, Nigel Osborne, Michael Finnissy, Gerard Schurmann and Sir Peter Maxwell-Davies are included under this heading. The advantage of having such big names at these events is that they attract many students and staff who may not in their normal course of life come across much contemporary music, let alone have the benefit of first-hand contact with the composer.

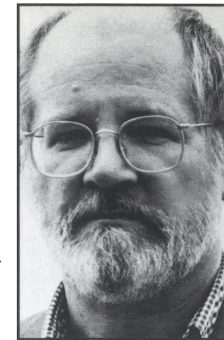
However, the Academy discovered early on that there was also a negative side to the success of the festivals. People began to think that modern music, like Christmas, only came around once a year. Only a percentage of students were directly involved in the festivals, and those who were not were still able to avoid contact with contemporary music from one year to the next.

Clearly the battle had not yet been won. To help integrate new music further into the daily life of the Academy, each department now includes in its teaching a healthy diet of new music alongside the

Nigel Clarke: "Things have certainly changed since I became a composition student at the RAM in 1982. Let's hope that the Academy's stated aim to promote the music of our own time continues to be upheld, and that we continue to keep our very own renaissance going within the Academy itself."



John Tavener's The Protecting Veil, a work of sacred modernism, topped the classical charts when it was released on CD last year



Nicholas Maw's huge symphony, Odyssey, was hailed by Simon Rattle as "one of the most important scores of the century"

more traditional repertoire, and students are expected to attend specialised classes which feature the music of recent times. It is now common to see our symphony and chamber orchestras featuring modern masterpieces in their programmes, and to hear the students performing music of their generation in their annual exams. In recent times the Academy's orchestras and ensembles, when touring abroad have billed contemporary music, and in particular pieces by RAM composers. This would never have happened pre-1982.

Another recent development at the Academy has been its promotion of the jazz, rock and commercial music genres, which are now recognised as important parts of contemporary music-making and are firmly based within the

Academy syllabus. This innovation has combined with the refurbishment of our electro-acoustic studio, the Manson Room, and its satellite studios. Music technology is one very obvious way in which the Academy is preparing its students for the next century. Nowadays, it is very necessary for piano students, for example, to learn how a synthesiser works, as most school music departments will have one, and the students may well be called to teach computer literate young people.

Another Academy initiative to render

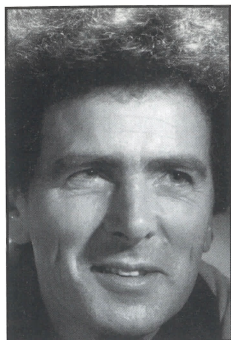
contemporary music more accessible has been to hold two series of chamber concerts per term called Mainly New. This series focuses on the music of a living composer who is invited to the Academy for the day to lecture and to hear their work performed

Within the span of a decade the Royal Academy has changed from a musical museum into an active proponent of music as a living art

During the week starting 8 March these composers, all of whom studied at the Academy, had the following works performed at the RAM Da Capo festival of music by living British composers:

- | | |
|--|--|
| Geoffrey Alvarez – The Raging Goddesses for two sopranos and percussion 1992 | Melanie Daiken – Les Petits Justes for mezzo soprano and piano 1967 |
| David Bedford – The Valley Sleeper, the Children, the Snakes and the Giant 1983 | Kenneth Dempster – Modern Athenians for free bass accordion 1990 |
| Pancakes with Butter, Maple Syrup and Bacon and the TV Weatherman for brass quintet 1973 | James Doherty – Tubing for horn, live electronics and tape 1992 |
| Richard Rodney Bennett – The isle is full of noises, Full fathom five (from Sea Change 1984) | David Dorwood – Amazonian Moonflower for free bass accordion 1992 |
| Morning Music 1990 | Brian Ferneyhough – Cassandra's Dream Song for flute solo 1970 |
| Sonata for piano and wind quintet 1986-7 | Sebastian Forbes – Sonata for 17 1987 |
| Symphony No 3 1987 | Andrew Gant – Serenade for four voices and string quartet 1992 |
| Elegy for viola and orchestra from Lady Caroline Lamb 1972 | Adam Gorb – Metropolis 1992 |
| Michael Berkeley – Coronach 1988 | Janet Graham – Three pieces for organ 1986 |
| Judith Bingham – Just before Dawn 1985 (revised 1990) | Edward Gregson – Blazon 1992 |
| Harrison Birtwistle – Gawain's Journey 1991 | Iain Hamilton – Antigone for wind octet 1992 |
| Howard Blake – Piano Concerto 1990 | Christopher Headington – Cinquanta for piano solo 1986 |
| Timothy Bowers – Piano Sonata 1984-5 | James Iliff – Duo for cello and double bass 1992 |
| Christopher Brown – Mass for four voices Op 76 1991 | Joanna Ive – Le diable au corps for oboe, bassoon and piano 1992 |
| Francis Burt – Echoes for nine players 1988-9 | Daniel Jones – Sonata for four trombones 1988 |
| David Carhart – Brass Quintet 1989 | John Joubert – The Phoenix and the Turtle for two sopranos, string trio and harpsichord Op 11 1984 |
| Brian Chapple – Requies for piano solo 1991 | |
| Nigel Clarke – Pacific Images for piano trio 1991 | |
| David Cullen – Arrangements of four songs by Simon and Garfunkel | |

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Howard Blake, the Academy's new visiting composition professor. There is an interview with him on page 22

in the lunchtime concert. The composer's work is usually sandwiched between pieces which are modern, entertaining and diverse in style. Some critics of this formula suggested that it might have the effect of ghettoising contemporary music. Fortunately this has not proved to be the case, and the concerts have caused considerable interest both inside and outside the Academy. In the first eighteen months of the series the composers Philip Grange, Judith Weir, Piers Hellawell, Dmitri Smirnov, Elena Firsova, John McLeod and Kalevi Aho have already been featured.

Things have certainly changed since I started as a composition student at the Academy in 1982. I once wrote in the RAM Magazine that I was worried to see "how performing music students judge and in general condemn modern music, usually avoiding it at all costs and saying that they do not understand it". This puzzled me, knowing that the vast majority of performers wanted to go on and make a career in a leading orchestra where up

to a quarter of the repertoire could be twentieth-century music. I see now a great deal more willingness to perform contemporary music amongst both students and staff, but that does not leave cause for complacency. New and better ways must still be found to keep pace with a vastly changing outside world and to equip students to tackle whatever music comes before them in their future careers.

An open-minded approach to new music is now all the more necessary in order to reflect today's changing taste in music. Already the public have made Henryk Gorecki, John Tavener, Michael Nyman, Alfred Schnittke and Mark Anthony Turnage best-sellers on CD. It seems that contemporary music is going through something of a renaissance in the outside world. Let's hope that the Academy's stated aim to promote the music of our own time continues to be upheld, and that we continue to keep our very own renaissance going within the Academy itself.

● continued from previous page

Minna Keal – Wind Quintet Op 2 1980
Susi Laurie – Hostile Light for two guitars 1992
Shinuh Lee – Melody, Harmony for orchestra 1992
Cyril Lloyd – Tentacles for percussion and tape Op 27 1992
John Manduell – Trois Chansons de la Renaissance for tenor and piano 1956
William Mathias – String Quartet No 3 1986
Cliff Masterson – The Light that Shines; Hopelessly Lost in You; I just can't Believe; Arms of another; Piano solo; Same old song; A moment from Heaven; Stop; My music; Sometimes
Nicholas Maw – American Games 1991; Music of Memory for guitar solo 1989; Little Concert for oboe, two horns and strings 1987; The Head of Orpheus for soprano and two clarinets 1992; The World in the Evening 1988
John Mayer – Sangit Alamkara (Musical Decorations) for piano duet 1988
Edward McGuire – Prelude 10 for harp solo 1983
John McLeod – A Dramatic Landscape for solo clarinet and wind 1990
George Newson – Aphelion/Perihelion for chamber ensemble 1989
Michael Nyman – Music from Prospero's Books
David Palmer – Symphonic Rock arrangements of the music of Jethro Tull, Genesis and Pink Floyd
Paul Patterson – White Shadows on the Dark Horizon Op 67 1989;
Harry Peat – Spiral Ray (Parts 1, 2 and 3)

Alwynne Pritchard – Jgiuhde for chamber ensemble 1992
Paul Reade – A Sea Journey for soprano and piano 1987
Jeremy Dale Roberts – Vers Libre for chamber ensemble 1979
Francis Routh – Suite for string orchestra 1992
Timothy Seddon – Elegy for piano solo 1992
Robert Sherlaw Johnson – Fanfares and Chorales for twelve brass 1992
Luminita Spinu – Between Heaven and Hell 1992
Richard Stoker – Nocturnal for horn trio Op 37 1970
Giles Swayne – Naaotwa Lala 1984
John Tavener – The Repentant Thief for clarinet solo, percussion, timpani and strings 1990; The Last Sleep of the Virgin for string quartet and handbells 1991; Two Hymns to the Mother of God 1985; Eonia 1989; Funeral Ikos 1981; He hath entered the Heaven 1982; Nomine Jesu 1970; Today the Virgin 1989; Three Surrealist Songs 1967-8
Matthew Taylor – Prelude, Meditation and Toccata for marimba solo 1991
John Wallace – The Summer of Discontent for brass ensemble 1992
Roderick Watkins – New Work for alto flute, bass clarinet, cello and tape 1992
John Webb – Introduction and Allegro for string orchestra 1992
Philip White – Three Love Songs 1979; Little Fly 1992
James Wood – Two Motets from the Prophet Isaiah for soprano and chamber ensemble 1981

Nigel Clarke is Manson Fellow at the Academy and he co-ordinates much of its contemporary music activities. He is also Secretary of the RAM Club.

Alexander Kelly, who is soon to retire from his job as the Academy's Piano Professor, gets an earful from the American pianist Ella Cyder

“ HI THERE!

Glad to meet you and talk with you. Yeah, the competition and how does it compare with the others I've bin to, well, I've bin around, excuse me, in competitions I mean, don't get any ideas now, the interview is strictly piano, a-ha? – though a lotta folks seem to find me vocally kinda fortissimo vocally speaking – but kinda cantabile as well – there's an art in doing these things, me and my friends take it all very very seriously, kinda cool too, we plan our lives well in advance – maybe a year, two years, we select the competitions we most wanna take part in we plan our itineraries, we work out our repertoires and then we re-ally go for the funds – sponsorship, scholarships, grants – everything, trusts, foundations, et-cet-era-a. You've gotta think ahead. Plan. The strategy is everything, who do you study with to prepare the repertoire, how do you fix some concerts to try out your repertoire in advance, to play it right in. In public. You can use a lotta the same repertoire if you study all the literature they send you.

This competition? Well, this one's real nice; kinda cute too; different, not one of the really big ones though, but the prize money's ve-ry good. It's a real friendly, even the jury's nice, well, most of them anyway.

Juries? Oh well, they can be something else I'm telling ya, when you do a lotta competitions like we do you kinda get to know some of the people on those juries – the regulars, that is, your career jury people, and some of them can be real nice, mind you there some others, the tight-lipped kind, you'd think their faces would bust if they were to even smile at you and if they laughed they might break something, like an artery, maybe, or just their ego; anyway, they never smile, not at any-y-bod-y, they haven't got faces, just masks, maybe it took twenty years to get masks with expressions like that or maybe they were just born that way.

You want me to be more specific? Jesus. Well, maybe not too specific, huh? OK, there's different kinds – from high-and-mighty to real nice, then there are some that are just bastards, I suppose if you spend most of your life or even half your life listening to competitions it would do something to your mind and if not your mind certainly your ass, there must be some kind of occupational disease even if it's only chronic constipation. Some will talk to you, tell you how you did, give you advice, others just pass you by, others might say 'Quite good but not one of the best' it's the way they say

'quite good' that gets me, you feel like something that's just crept out of a wall somewhere.

Well, there's that Madame Chocolat-Assorti, anyway that's what we call her, the one with the switched-on smile but she only switches it on for men and, boy, when she's talking to some of those men she lights up the landscape, actions, gestures, everything; the older men love her, the young ones feel nervous anyway, she can be quite nice note the 'quite' bit, even to us girls, that is, if she wants to be, then there's that Madame Blitz from somewhere way out East, she talks all the time when everybody's performing and she has to have everything translated by an interpreter and there's constant uproar and the audience gets mad at her. Then there's that Russian Blok. We call him the Blok-buster he's the one who has a voice like a dinosaur how do I know what a dinosaur sounds like? Well I don't know what a dinosaur sounds like but I'm dead sure that if you heard a dinosaur shout it would be just like Blok. The worst one is the one we call Anus Horribilis – why? – because he's an asshole, he's the worst all right, nothing's good enough for him, nobody, but nobody, can play, you can tell the rest of the jury hate him, when he turns up somewhere in intermissions or something, they just fade away somewhere else, it's fascinating, just watch them next time you're around, no we don't have names for the nice ones, they're just nice.

The other participants? Oh you mean the rest of us playing, you English talk like dictionaries, why can't you just talk English, no, excuse me, just me being funny, don't get all steamed up, well some of them out there are real worried, maybe they're getting on a bit, thirty or something, and they feel they're getting to the end of the line, they have to win something, be the first prize, the big winner, if they're to interest an impresario, and the strain's terrible, there was one guy in tears because he's never been anything but third or fourth, so how does he get to be first he says and there's no answer to that you've just got to go on in and do your best and hell, not to worry so much, if you didn't worry so much you might get to be first; of course you could try being extra nice to Madame Chocolat-Assorti, she's susceptible to good-looking young men but that's only one more vote. I've met that poor guy before, we've met over a steaming Sonata Appassionata you could say, he's real nice but he just worries too much about the wrong things anyway I gotta go practise now. Nice to meet ya.

Go and do it for yourself

Amelia Freedman is, according to one of her friends, a true artist whose special talent is to encourage artistry in others. An interview by Paul Fisher

ALTHOUGH only a shade over fifty, Amelia Freedman has been around for long enough to seem a Grand Old Woman of British music. She's got the MBE, is a Fellow of the Academy, programme adviser to the Philharmonia and a consultant to the Barbican and the South Bank. The gongs and the plum jobs are well earned. She's been artistic director of the Bath Festival since 1985 and, above everything else in a packed CV, has lived for nearly three decades with the job title of founder and artistic director, Nash Ensemble.

She was also the Nash's original clarinettist, until sacking herself in 1969 on the principle that "if I apply standards of excellence to other people, I must also apply them to myself". Nonetheless she insists she's remained more a musician than bureaucrat, saying that someone in her position must have "the professionalism and the imagination to create something of quality". Ideas come before administration. "I haven't sacrificed one bit of musicianship," she says. "I'm one of those people who stands by their beliefs and principles. My belief is in artistic and not sponsor-led programmes."

When the sponsor allows artistic freedom, she's generous with her praise and makes special mention of IBM (which also supported the Academy's own March Festival of music written by former students). The computer giant sponsored the Nash's 20th-Century Music Series at the South Bank and she offers "thanks and appreciation for an innovative and adventurous company which allowed us to commission ten outstanding and diverse composers".

In hard pressed times such as these, her views might not make her every sponsor's ideal administrator, though her reputation is such that she won't ever go begging for work. "I've never applied for a job yet," she says. "I've always found myself..." Well, people with her gift of single-minded determination always find themselves the sort of work they want to do. The Bath job came in 1984 because she'd had a lot of ideas when she'd gone there with the Nash. Her main idea was to have strongly themed programmes and she's stamped herself on the Bath Festival every bit as much as her predecessors Thomas Beecham, Yehudi Menuhin, William Glock and William Mann.

Amelia Freedman started the Nash to drum up work for herself and friends and because she "was fascinated with the repertoire that never got

played". That was in 1964 when she was graduating from the Academy with a clarinet Certificate of Merit. She'd been part of a "George Shearing-style jazz ensemble" which shows that hers was never a musical sensibility to claim the classics belong in one elevated category and all other music somewhere else.

In the beginning The Nash was exclusively an Academy band. She'd wanted to call it the Academy Ensemble, but Thomas Armstrong, the then principal, demurred and it was named after an architect. When Amelia Freedman talks of the Nash she can't help but use the superlatives of a born publicist. "There are a lot of distinguished string quartets but only one mixed string and wind. It is the only group of its kind out of the RAM." And it is one of the few ensembles consistently to have provided work for 12 musicians... a piano, wind quintet, string quintet and harpist.

The Nash, to quote one critic, is renowned for "programmes as finely architected as the beautiful Nash terraces in London from which the group takes its name". The Arts Council paid a similar compliment when it praised Freedman's Bath Festival work for "the thematic approach to bring continuity and coherence to the shape of the programme".

For "finely architected" and "continuity and coherence", read concerts which have freely blended the classical and contemporary. "As an artistic director," Freedman says, "I try and balance the unusual and commissioned work with what people know." That a mixed musical diet is now a commonplace for concert-goers is due in no small part to Freedman's efforts to bring the avant garde out into the open.

The Nash has premiered 150 works and commissioned over 100 and its first night credits are a roll call of modern British composers: Nicholas Maw, Colin and David Matthews, Richard Rodney Bennett, Simon Holt, Robin Holloway, Gordon Crosse, Nigel Osborne, Oliver Knussen and Mark-Anthony Turnage. John Tavener was a fellow-student of hers and the Nash premiered several of his works in the late sixties and early seventies. "I'd ask for a chamber music piece and end up with something like Requiem for Father Malachy."

The Nash's most consistent strand is that it is a performing more than a recording ensemble. Andrew Keener, who has produced several Nash discs, recalls a pianist friend telling him his next booking was Brahms' B Flat in Birmingham. "Piqued that I knew nothing of these sessions," says Keener, "I enquired which label this recording was for. 'Oh no,' was the reply. 'This is a concert. Do you remember those?'" I assured him I did, and said that as a record producer in today's manic world it's

Left: At the centre of the Nash Ensemble. Amelia Freedman, with both hands firmly on the cello case, surrounded by Roger Chase, Marcia Crayford, Brian Wightman, Philippa Davies and Christopher van Kampen.

PHOTO: BILL MACKENZIE

all too easy to lose perspective on the real thing, as opposed to what is captured in the studio. So, thank goodness for the Nash (and the ever-imaginative Amelia Freedman) who behave unmanically, as if their diaries were empty for weeks on either side. Not the case, and may it remain so for the next 25 years." The glowing reviews quoted in Nash brochures are mostly of concerts. "The Nash is a proper concert-giving ensemble which also records," Freedman explains. "Therefore they're a proper team, unlike those ensembles which come together for recording and then don't play those works again."

The other string to Freedman's artistic director's bow has been her eight-year tenure at Bath. She has kept a major international festival going on minimal budgets (£200,000 this year), and given the festival stronger themes than any of her predecessors. Her main themes are a country – France; Italy; the USSR; the USA; Germany; Spain, France – and this has enabled her to find funding and to organise festivals which aren't a series of isolated incidents. The 1993 Bath Festival, which will be her last, features Norwegian music. It begins on May 21 and runs for a fortnight.

In middle age people tend to say things are either improving or deteriorating. By and large Freedman finds the world around her has improved. "In 1959, when I started at the Academy, there wasn't the open-mindedness and new music just wasn't being played. Students probably have more advantages now, there are more organisations to support young professionals. The thing about Britain is that we have so much variety, so many composers and some of the greatest talent. But we

all have to struggle because we never have enough money." Lack of money is the complaint which tests an artistic director's professional optimism to breaking point. The Bath City Council, for example, never did come up with a hall big enough to hold a symphony orchestra. It's what she lobbied for unsuccessfully, though there's a fine pedigree of failure here for Sir Thomas Beecham also failed to persuade Bath's city fathers to build a concert hall.

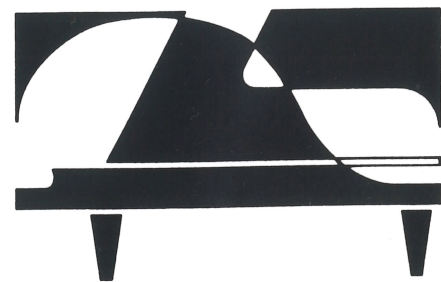
In her youth Freedman railed against a stifling of new music and a gap between student and professional life; the Nash is part of what she sees as a general improvement. She's not saying things are easy and points to a deterioration in the decline of concert-going as part of a full musical education. "It's difficult to get students to come to outside concerts, and I know because I've offered tickets. I urge any student that it is vital to go and listen to other people and other standards." Other than that, she makes no calls to conformity. "Students who succeed," she says, "take it on themselves to have all the tuition and support they can get but in the end, if you're really going to make it, you've got to go and do it for yourself."

Go and do it for yourself: it could be Amelia Freedman's motto.

Nicholas Maw, who's had several of his works premiered and recorded by the Nash, calls the ensemble "among the great benefactors of English musical life in the post-war era". He best summarises what many feel about its founder. "At the centre of this marvellously creative music making has been Amelia herself. She is that rare being: a true artist whose special talent is to encourage artistry in others."

Paul Fisher is
editor of the Royal
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The romantic dreamer

Charles Searson gives an appreciation of Arnold Bax, a private figure who has become one of the most talked-about British composers

OF COURSE Arnold Bax never had an affair with a cinema usherette, but the fact that he had relations with a handful of different women during his life made him an easy target for Ken Russell in his recent film tribute. These women were symptomatic of a yearning in Bax's temperament which was difficult to satisfy: he once described himself as a "tireless hunter of dreams". He also said that the music he most admired was that founded on "the ultimate realities of Life, Love and Death". Even then these were rather old-fashioned artistic values.

Ten years ago the centenary of the composer's birth was celebrated, and today most of his major works are recorded, to the delight of a small but passionate following, and to the consternation of some musical academics who remain horrified by the wasteful excesses of his more luxuriant scores. Personal circumstances meant that Bax did not have to work to bring in an income, and he was free to write a very great deal of music: seven symphonies, for example, as well as a wealth of other orchestral and chamber works. Too much music, in fact, and not all of it bears repeated listening. But there are pieces, and there moments within pieces, where he reveals himself as a truly great composer.

What is unusual about Bax's work is that it draws on so many sources, not always musical ones, and there is often a deliberate mixing of fantasy and reality: "I am a brazen Romantic," he once wrote. The things that inspired him included legends – King Arthur, Tristan and Isolde – the sea, Russia, and, most importantly of all, the atmosphere and the legends of Ireland, which Bax first visited at the age of 19. This led to a particular Celtic flavour in his music, and he even went on to write Irish poetry under the pseudonym of Dermot O'Byrne.

Bax started his formal studies at the Royal Academy of Music in 1900 when he was 16. He won a Macfarren Scholarship two years later, but left before it had run its course.

The Academy, before the First World War, had a reputation for being rather a radical establishment. Part of this may have been due to the unusual methods of teachers such as Frederick Corder, who was the very opposite of everything embodied by Stanford and Parry, for example, at the Royal College of Music. Corder loved Wagner, confessed to understanding nothing of Debussy, and exhorted his students to ignore past formal principles and to aim, above all, for beauty in music. For him, the

ultimate goal was the orchestral tone-poem.

And Bax went on to write quite a lot of tone-poems, although it was several years before his gifts matured fully. In the years 1910-20 he wrote what is arguably his greatest music: the tone-poems *The Garden of Fand*, *November Woods* and *Tintagel*. All of these are complex and epic scores written – as was Bax's custom – for large orchestra. Their meanings, too, are complex: Bax often used the symbols of nature (the Garden of Fand is the sea) to express more personal emotions. *Tintagel*, for example, combines a seascape in music with a celebration of the Arthurian and other legends. There is a direct quote from Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* at one point, and it is worth remembering that the piece was written after Bax had fallen in love with the pianist Harriet Cohen, one of several influential women in his life.

When, in 1921, Bax wrote his Third Piano Sonata, it was pointed out to him that he had in fact written a symphony. He went on to orchestrate the work, substituting a new slow movement, and his First Symphony was premiered on 4 December 1922. The critics loved it, and for a time Bax was seen as a leading figure in British music, an enfant

terrible of the stature of the young William Walton and Arthur Bliss. But are Bax's symphonies really symphonies? Each comprises just three movements. There is a logic to these pieces, but it is not the logic of Brahms, or even Sibelius, to whose work Bax's symphonies are sometimes compared. The Third is probably the best known, possibly because years ago it was the only one recorded, but it is not necessarily the best. There are moments in all his symphonies when Bax pulls off unique feats of imagination, orchestral colour (he

was a master orchestrator) and harmonic daring, and yet even in the Second Symphony, which is a personal favourite, these elements never quite add up to a satisfying whole.

Bax had written his Seventh Symphony, and, indeed, all the other significant music he was to write, by the outbreak of the Second World War. Although the Seventh is one of the best symphonies, the dreamlike, other-worldly character of the music was rather out of keeping with the mood of the times, and the piece marks a turning point in Bax's fortunes. The beginning of this long period of decline was also marked – ironically enough – by Bax being made Master of the King's Music, a post which offered little and for which he was temperamentally quite unsuited. In the autumn of

Arnold Bax's work draws on many sources and there is often a deliberate mixing of fantasy and reality.

There are pieces, and there are moments within pieces, where he reveals himself as a truly great composer



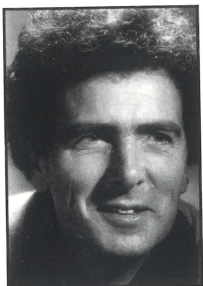
Arnold Bax pictured with Harriet Cohen in 1921. They first met in 1913 when she was an "elfin child" of 17 and a piano student at the RAM. Forty years later, Bax wrote her the *Concertante* for left hand and piano after she had injured her right hand. It was one of the last pieces he wrote.

1940, as the Battle of Britain was at its height, the new Master of the King's Music moved into a room at the White Horse at Storrington, Sussex. Here he seldom listened to music at all, and spent much of his time gossiping with the locals and playing billiards. His musical imagination seemed to deteriorate. For a time he wrote nothing, then, when producing a score for the film *Malta GC* (1943) found that he had to alter two notes in the 'big tune' at the end, in order to avoid too close a resemblance to the tune *Men of Harlech*. His other film score, *Oliver Twist* (1947) caused him agonies in its composition, yet the result this time is colourful and effective. The obligatory March was supplied for the coronation in 1953, and this proved to be Bax's last year. More important among his last scores was the

Concertante for piano left-hand and orchestra, written for Harriet Cohen after she had injured her right hand.

For a long time after his death there was a period of almost deliberate neglect of Bax. His music was very seldom played and there were few recordings. It was the efforts of conductors such as Vernon Handley in the 1960s which started to bring to Bax's best work the attention it deserved. A great deal of his music is now available on CD: for this we should also be grateful, while bearing in mind that recording cycles sometimes obscure the really worthwhile pieces in their bid for comprehensiveness. Bax remains an attractive minor character in the history of British music; a reminder that visionaries are also prone to human failings.

Charles Searson is a long-time Arnold Bax fan and the deputy editor of Classic CD magazine



Howard Blake:
"Music has the ability to reflect the inner spiritual quality of the person and, whether you like it or not, the person you are comes out in your music."

PHOTO: CLIVE BARDA

Jack of all trades

Jessica Duchen interviews Howard Blake who, for the past 25 years, has been one of that elite band to have made a living from composition

HOWARD BLAKE has become one of the most performed, commissioned and well loved composers in the country. Yet he seems more than a little surprised to find himself appointed to the position of visiting composition professor at the Royal Academy of Music.

Blake started out studying the piano at the Royal Academy, with composition as second study, and it was not altogether a happy time for him. The narrow outlook which proliferated in music colleges in the early 1960s was disheartening for a young man with a passionate interest in jazz, philosophy, theatre and film. The predominance of atonality in the contemporary music world was even more disheartening for a would-be composer who felt little sympathy for a style offering no place for tonal, melodic writing. All that rather put him off music in educational establishments and the upshot was that he gave up music completely for several years. Thirty years on, the runaway success of *The Snowman* and a steady stream of commissions for everything from film music to his new violin concerto prove that the tables have turned; and his appointment to the RAM is perhaps an indication of the Academy's broadened and more down-to-earth approach to the training of young musicians.

But Blake's time away from music did not serve him badly. First, he took a job as a cinema projectionist for the National Film Theatre. "I worked every other day and saw all the greatest films," Blake says. "I also made a film myself while I was there. So I learned a lot about film, which came in very useful later on when I was writing a lot of film music." He thought seriously about studying to become a film director, but he was beginning to miss music more and more, and eventually decided he'd rather play music, regardless of the life he led. "I got a job playing the piano in a pub. That was terribly good, because it taught me to play absolutely anything by ear." This in turn led to Blake becoming a session musician. He was the pianist for *The Avengers* series, the biggest of all at the time, and it was this which provided him with a first big break into composition. He took over the writing of the score in 1967 and since then has made his living exclusively from composition, a rare enough feat at any time in musical history.

"When I got into writing for TV it was like a huge release. I suddenly felt I was needed," Blake remembers. "I just wanted to write anything and everything, and took a huge delight in it all. A lot of it was pastiche and a lot of it was rubbish, but I found a terrific glee in doing it." He wrote at great speed and his success was such that by 1970 he had a huge house in Knightsbridge and a packed schedule of commissions. At which point - "I realised this was not what I had set out to do and I

got fed up with this whole life. I knew how to do all these tricks and how to write in all these different styles, but I found it was all very empty."

Blake went to Cornwall and "sat on a beach thinking" for four months. He decided that he would go and live in the country and begin again; and during the next ten years, living in a water mill in the middle of Sussex and practising yoga and meditation, he began to work on his own musical language. "At this time I wrote the *Walking in the Air* tune, although I didn't know where to place it until *The Snowman* came up ten years later." He wrote orchestral and chamber music, and a large-scale oratorio, *Benedictus* (now recorded by Robert Tear, the Bach Choir and Sir David Willcocks), but nothing of a commercial nature.

Towards the end of the 1970s Blake was asked to write some more film music - including *The Duellists*, which won the Cannes Film Festival and produced a spate of commissions. Then one day he visited an animation studio and was shown the drawings for a project called *The Snowman*.

"One of the theories I'd developed over many years was the idea of creating a combined art work in film. I had always wanted to write a score that would be the actual motivating force for a film. When I looked at *The Snowman* I immediately knew that this was the project on which I could try out this idea. I said I would do it if there were no words - if the music generated the film."

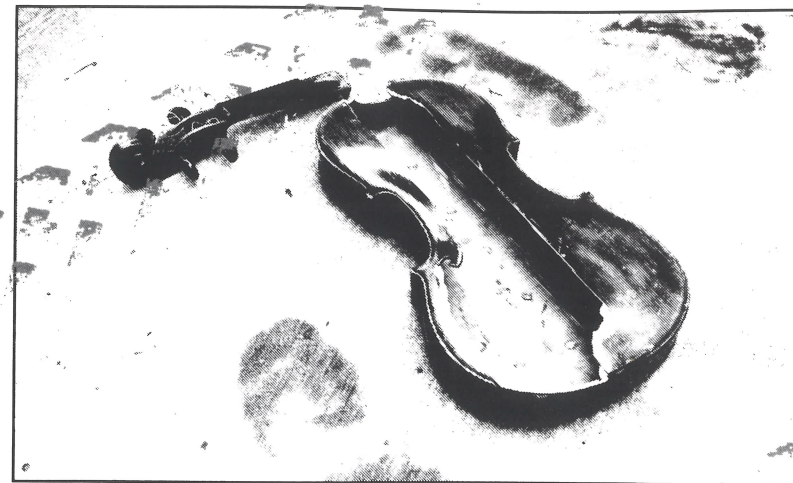
At first the response was unenthusiastic, but Blake persuaded John Coates, the producer, to let him try. Seven minutes of music in, they took the project to Channel 4 and were given the go-ahead.

The Snowman was followed by another animated film in collaboration with John Coates, *Granpa*, which is now being hailed as "a masterpiece" in America; and five years on, Coates and Blake are planning a third film.

Meanwhile, Blake has a good deal on his plate. His violin concerto was premiered in Leeds Town Hall on 6 February by Christiane Edinger and the English Northern Philharmonia under Paul Daniel.

Blake is now enjoying his teaching at the RAM - though, like many composers, he points out that composition can't really be taught as such. It is more a matter of practical guidance than anything else. "You shouldn't try to influence someone as to style or content. Composition is an essentially practical craft and students often need guidance on instrumentation or on where cuts need to be made. But everyone has their own language and it's a projection of your own psyche which evolves gradually from the moment you're born. Music has this ability to reflect the inner spiritual quality of the person and whether you like it or not, the person you are comes out in your music."

Jessica Duchen is assistant editor of *Classical Music* magazine and is a contributor to *The Independent* and *Gramophone*



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